

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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S E C R E T TEL AVIV 9523

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, EV, IS, XF
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH BEGIN PREPARATORY TO SADAT VISIT

REF: A) TEL AVIV 9514 B) STATE 277205

1. FOLLOWING ARE FURTHER DETAILS FROM YESTERDAY'S
MEETING NOT REPORTED REFTEL A. THEY WILL GIVE ADDITIONAL
FLAVOR OF PROBLEMS WE ARE UP AGAINST HERE AS SADAT VISIT BEGINS.

2. WHEN I GAVE APPRECIATION OF ARAB REACTION AND
INTERNAL EGYPTIAN REACTION TO SADAT INITIATIVE BOTH BEGIN
AND DAYAN SHOWED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST. BEGIN ASKED IF
SADAT HAD DISCUSSED VISIT IN ADVANCE WITH SAUDIS; I TOLD
HIM WE DID NOT THINK SO. HE CITED KADDOUMI STATEMENT
TO CHARGE PLO WITH A "VIOLENT" REACTION AND WAS UNIMPRESSED
BY MY POINTING OUT THAT ARAFAT HAS SHOWN CONSIDERABLE
RESTRAINT. THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY FOLLOWING WORLD REACTION
CLOSELY (E.G. VATICAN APPROVAL) AND DAYAN DISAGREED
FLATLY WITH MY ASSESSMENT OF ARAB ATTITUDES. HE
INSISTS WE "DO NOT UNDERSTAND ARABS." HE FOUND THEIR
REACTION HOPEFULLY MILD. IN ANY EVENT, EGYPTIAN INTERNAL
RESPONSE IS THE CRUCIAL ONE AND HE FOUND GAMASY'S SUPPORT
FOR SADAT BOTH CRUCIAL AND VERY ENCOURAGING. HE THINKS
USG PARTICULARLY OVERESTIMATES IMPORTANCE OF SAUDIS;

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THEY DON'T HAVE THE INFLUENCE OR THE MOTIVES OF GOOD
WILL THAT WE ATTRIBUTE TO THEM.

3. DAYAN OBVIOUSLY HAS SOME IDEA, NOT ALTOGETHER CLEAR,
OF USING VISIT TO EFFECT RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN SADAT AND
WEST BANK ARABS TO FACILITATE SOLUTION OF PALESTINIAN
REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA. ISRAELIS ARE MAKING CONSIDERABLE

EFFORT TO GET SADAT TOGETHER WITH WEST BANK LEADERS BUT REPORT THAT PLO HAS USED INTIMIDATION TO PREVENT SOME OF THEM FROM MEETING, E.G. FREIJ OF BETHLEHEM AND SHAWA OF GAZA. PEOPLE IN MOSQUE NEAR JERUSAELM ROAD CHEERED WHEN EGYPTIAN ADVANCE PARTY DROVE BY ON FRIDAY. HE HOPES THAT WEST BANK LEADERS CAN CONVINCE SADAT THEY ARE SUITABLE REPRESENTATIVES FOR GENEVA (NO NEED FOR AMERICAN PROFESSORS) AND THAT SADAT CAN GO BACK TO BROTHER ARABS AND SAY, "I MET WITH THE PALESTINIAN ARABS AND WE CAN SOLVE REPRESENTATION PROBLEM WITH THEM."

4. APART FROM RESTRAINT ON NEGATIVES (SUCH AS PLO) AND EFFORT TO SOUND AS CONCILIATORY AS POSSIBLE IN HIS KNESSET SPEECH, BEGIN MENTIONED FEW TANGIBLE RESPONSES TO SADAT. HE WAS PREPARED TO OFFER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS EVEN BEFORE PEACE TREATY SIGNED, IF SADAT INTERESTED; AND, OF COURSE, IS MORE THAN ANXIOUS TO PAY RETURN VISIT. UNHAPPILY, HE SEEMS TO REGARD THOSE AS SIGNIFICANT GESTURE TO SADAT. HE FELT THAT REFRAINING FROM MILITANT STATEMENTS ABOUT PLO OR TERRITORIES ("WHICH WE HAVE LEGAL AND MORAL RIGHT TO MAKE") WAS ITSELF A MAJOR SHOW OF MAGNANIMITY. AFTER ALL, HE SAID, EVEN US DOES NOT INSIST ON TOTAL WITHDRAWAL AND PRESIDENT HIMSELF IS AGAINST A PALESTINIAN STATE. DESPITE DAYAN'S AND MY URGING, HE RESISTED NOTION OF SAYING ANYTHING TO SUGGEST ISRAELIS MIGHT BE REAPPRAISING POSITIONS OR
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COMING TO NEW IDEAS ON BIG ISSUES AS RESULT OF SADAT'S CONVERSATIONS; "I CANNOT MISLEAD." BUT HE WILL SAY EVERYTHING IS NEGOTIABLE EXCEPT ISRAELI SECURITY.

5. BEGIN IS INTRIGUED WITH IDEA OF AN INVITATION TO HUSSEIN TO FOLLOW UP SADAT VISIT. "ONE DAY I WILL INVITE HIM, IN ORDER TO INFORM HIM ABOUT RESULTS OF SADAT'S VISIT."

6. COMMENT: AS YOU WILL SEE FROM REFTEL A, BEGIN'S RECEPTIVITY AT THIS MOMENT IS BOUND TO BE EXTREMELY LOW TO THE SUGGESTIONS IN PRESIDENT'S LETTER. THEY WOULD HAVE BEGIN PROPOSE TO SADAT MAJOR PROCEDURAL CONCESSIONS TO ASSAD IN ORDER TO LAUNCH GENEVA. BECAUSE HE HAS NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY PREPARED IN RECENT WEEKS FOR THESE PROPOSALS, THE LETTER WILL BE A REAL SHOCK FOR BEGIN. I ONLY HOPE THAT SOMEHOW THE MYSTERIOUS AURA OF A MIRACULOUS EVENT WHICH IS HOVERING OVER JERUSALEM WILL TRANSFORM WHAT IS AT THE MOMENT AN UNPROMISING PROSPECT.

7. RECOMMEND THIS TELEGRAM BE GIVEN SAME DISTRIBUTION AS REFTEL A.

LEWIS

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